

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHERLOCK HOLMES SOCIETY OF LONDON

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The subscription for postal subscribers who send money rather than stamped & self-addressed envelopes is (for 12 issues) £7.50 in the UK, and £12.00 or US\$21.00 overseas. Please make dollar checks payable to The Sherlock Holmes Society of London. Prices went up in March, and I've borne the increase since then. An e-mail subscription costs nothing and pretty much guarantees instantaneous delivery.

Sherlock Holmes parody and pastiche written during Conan Doyle's lifetime – mostly parody, of course – has a strong appeal, and, since most of the earlier collections (*The Affair of the Lost Compression*, *My Evening With Sherlock Holmes*, Ellery Queen's *The Misadventures of Sherlock Holmes*, and others) are themselves out of print, *A Bedside Book of Early Sherlockian Parodies and Pastiches* (MX Publishing; www.mxpublishing.co.uk; £12.99), compiled and edited by the indefatigable **Charles Press**, is very welcome. The stories and snippets range from 'An Evening With Sherlock Holmes' in 1891 to 'Rescuing the Mr Chips of Yale' in 1927, taking in work by JM Barrie, O Henry, Bret Harte, Ring Lardner and many others. It's good to see the Wild Wood episode from *The Wind in the Willows* recognised as a tribute to Sherlock Holmes!

After 'The Final Problem' in December 1893, *The Strand Magazine* filled the gap with stories of another detective, Martin Hewitt, written by Arthur Morrison. It's been suggested that Hewitt was the young Mycroft Holmes, but David Marcum has a more plausible and attractive theory – that he was Sherlock, early in his career as an investigator. So, with very little tweaking, Mr Marcum gives us volume one of *Sherlock Holmes in Montague Street: Sherlock Holmes's Early Investigations*, originally published as *Martin Hewitt adventures* by **Arthur Morrison**, edited, Holmes-ed, and with original material by **David Marcum** (MX; £9.99). Purists can, of course, still find Morrison's original versions, but these are remarkably convincing in their new guise.

Others besides Andrew Lane have tried to reconstruct the detective's early years. The series called *The Boy Sherlock Holmes* by **Shane Peacock** has been consistently popular and critically acclaimed in Canada and the US since the first, *Eye of the Crow*, in 2007. Now all six novels are available in the UK, published by Tundra and distributed by Turnaround (www.turnarounduk.com), including the sixth and last, *Becoming Holmes* (£7.99).

Sherlock Holmes and the Black Widower by **Kieran McMullen** (MX; £9.99) sees the detective unwillingly lured from his retirement. Dr Watson, three times widowed, has proposed to his former landlady, but her nephew suspects that the doctor's first three wives did not die natural deaths.

Also set after Holmes's retirement is *Sherlock Holmes: Gods of War* by **James Lovegrove** (Titan; www.titanbooks.com; £7.99). Late in 1913, Watson's visit to his old friend is interrupted by a mysterious jewel robbery and an even more mysterious death. A young man is found dead below the cliffs at Beachy Head, but did he kill himself, as his wealthy father insists, or is there a significance to rumours of a martial cult and impending war? The author lives in Eastbourne, and brings the area and its traditions to vivid life.

The protagonists of *The Mystery Surrounding Watson's Lost Dispatch Box* by **Gary Lovisi** (MX; £6.99) are Thomas Jones, an elderly New England bookseller, and his streetwise young friend Juan Marcano. After the murder of Irene Adler's great-great-grandson, their search for Dr Watson's papers brings them up against tough cops and dangerous drug dealers.

Sleight of Fate by **Balaji Narasimham** (MX; £6.99) is also set in the present day. A woman is tied to a chair in a windowless room. If she can't answer seventeen questions about Sherlock Holmes, she will be

killed. This is a story of redemption, and well written. You may find it more appealing than I did.

Barry Baskerville Returns by **Richard L Kellogg**, with very nice illustrations by **Gary Kato** (Airship 27; <http://Airship27Hangar.com>; £6.66, or £1.25 Kindle) follows last year's *Barry Baskerville Solves a Case*. Young Barry's desire to be a detective amuses and sometimes frustrates his family and friends, but in solving an inadvertent theft he proves that his time spent studying the methods of Sherlock Holmes wasn't wasted. It's a clever and very attractive little book.

News from the Baker Street Irregulars: *The Undershaw Set* contains specially bound copies of *On Conan Doyle* by **Michael Dirda** and *The Remarkable Characters Of Arthur Conan Doyle*, edited by **Joel B Silver**. The set is limited to eighty signed, numbered copies, each volume bound in royal purple cloth with gold stamping and a matching custom slip-case. *The Undershaw Set* costs \$165.00, plus postage, from www.bakerstreetjournal.com. All profits will go to the Undershaw Preservation Trust.

The Mammoth Book of The Best Of British Crime 11 edited by **Maxim Jakubowski** (Robinson; £8.99) includes 'Secret of the Dead' by **David Stuart Davies**, in which a very young Holmes joins forces with the elderly ex-Sergeant Cuff to solve a village murder.

Other new and forthcoming titles: *Pinkerton's Great Detective: The Rough-And-Tumble Career of James McParland, America's Sherlock Holmes* by **Beau Riffenburgh** (Penguin Books; 25 November; £10.62). *The Adventure of the Plated Spoon and Other Tales of Sherlock Holmes* by **Loren D Estleman** (Adams Media Corporation; 28 November; £17.99). *In the Company of Sherlock Holmes* edited by **Laurie R King & Leslie S Klinger** (Pegasus Books; 23 December; £15.99). *'Paddington' Pollaky, Private Detective: The Mysterious Life and Times of the Real Sherlock Holmes* by **Bryan Kesselman** (The History Press; 2 February 2015; £12.99).

Two, to One, Be: Sherlock Holmes and a House of Light, Shadows and Views (MX; no price yet) originally scheduled for 22 May, will be published on 19 July, when there'll be an attempt to set an official world record for the largest number of people dressed as Holmes in one place – University College London. Both the book and the **Guinness World Record** attempt will raise money for the restoration of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's study, and the stained glass windows at Undershaw, whose new owners, the DFN Charitable Foundation, welcome help from the Undershaw Preservation Trust with regard to the building's historical aspects. Details of the world record attempt are at www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/guinness-world-record-the-most-amount-of-people-dressed-as-sherlock-holmes-tickets-11752489011.

The June issue of *The Sherlockian E-Times*, which has, almost imperceptibly, evolved from the Classic Specialties catalogue into **Carolyn and Joel Senter's** monthly newsletter, is at www.sherlock-holmes.com/e_times14-6.html. It's always welcome, but maybe I should now list it with the 'periodicals received'!

The **Conan Doyle Estate's** appeal against the ruling, in a case brought by **Leslie S Klinger**, that the fifty stories published before 1923 are all in the public domain in the USA was heard on 22 May. On 16 June the appeal court gave its decision: the ruling stands. Judge Richard Posner said: 'We cannot find any basis in statute or case law for extending a copyright beyond its expiration. When a story falls into the public domain, story elements – including characters covered by the expired copyright – become fair game for follow-on authors.' The Estate is apparently considering an appeal to the Supreme Court.

On 19 June, at **Christie's** in New York, The manuscript of 'Black Peter' was sold for \$260,000, and the iconic 'Silver Blaze' illustration by

Sidney Paget of Holmes and Watson in the railway compartment went for \$90,000. Arthur Conan Doyle's surgical scissors fetched \$3,700. Those prices don't include the buyers' premiums of 25% on bids up to \$100,000, and 20% on the extra above \$100,000 up to \$2,000,000.

From the *Kent & Sussex Courier*, 14 June: 'The fire in Crowborough this morning took place in the former home of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, **Windlesham Manor**, now a home for the elderly... The alarm was raised at 12.44am with reports there was smoke in a room in the building. Three fire engines were sent from Crowborough and Uckfield. Six firefighters wearing breathing apparatus went into the building... One person was taken to hospital suffering from smoke inhalation. A number of other people were checked over by South East Coast Ambulance crews. It is believed to be an accidental electrical fire in the roof space.' There's been no further report, so we assume there's no serious damage to the house.

From July, there'll be a public art trail in London of fifty **BookBenches**, shaped as open books, launched for the National Literacy Trust's *Books about Town* project, to celebrate London's literary legacy and raise vital funds for literacy. Visitors can discover the BookBenches by following literary trails around London. The City of London will host one of the trails and other benches will likely appear in Greenwich and Bloomsbury. The Estates of Conan Doyle, Agatha Christie and Ian Fleming are paying tribute to literary heroes Sherlock Holmes, Hercule Poirot and James Bond by sponsoring illustrated benches in their honour. There's more information at www.booksabouttown.org.uk/.

On 20 May Nick Utechin, Jean and I attended an 'advance media preview' at the **Museum of London** for the exhibition *Sherlock Holmes: The Man Who Never Lived and Will Never Die*, which will open on 17 October and run until 12 April 2015. Exhibits will include Sidney Paget's portrait of Arthur Conan Doyle and original drawings by Paget; the manuscript of 'The Empty House' (we reproduced four pages in the Society's book *Back to Baker Street* in 1994); pages from Edgar Allan Poe's manuscript of 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue'; the Belstaff coat and Derek Rose dressing gown worn by Benedict Cumberbatch in *Sherlock*; and a great deal more, imaginatively presented to chart the detective's links with London. Tickets are on sale now at www.museumoflondon.org.uk/london-wall/whats-on/exhibitions-displays/sherlock-holmes/.

John Addy reports that there's some interesting Conan Doyle material in the Crime Fiction section of the **British Library's** blog. At <http://britishlibrary.typepad.co.uk/english-and-drama/crime-fiction/> you can listen to ACD talking about spiritualism, on a record made just weeks before his death in 1930, and to a recording of a séance at the Aeolian Hall in 1934 which features the alleged voice of ACD, speaking from beyond the grave. Scroll further down and you can hear him talking about Sherlock Holmes.

The Baker Street Irregulars graphic novels, written by our own **Tony Lee** and illustrated by **Dan Boulwood**, are out of print in America, but on October 17, 18, 19, 24 & 25 October, and 1, 2, 8 & 9 November, the Todd Wehr Theater in Milwaukee, Wisconsin will present a play, *Sherlock Holmes: The Baker Street Irregulars* by **Eric Coble**, based on the books (www.marcuscenter.org/show/sherlock-holmes/).

Chelmsford Civic Theatre has announced *Sherlock Holmes: The Scandal of the Scarlet Woman*, presented by **Rumpus Theatre Company**, and based on 'A Scandal in Bohemia' (www.chelmsford.gov.uk/sherlock-holmes; 01245 606505). On 17, 18 & 19 September the play will be at the Fairfield Halls, Croydon, (www.fairfield.co.uk/showSearch.php?searchtext=sherlock+holmes&search=Search+for+Show).

Chapterhouse Theatre Company continues touring with its open-air production of *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*. Details are at www.chapterhouse.org/show5.html.

Here's an interesting view of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, in an essay by **Sean Fitzpatrick** – www.crisismagazine.com/2014/the-hound-of-the-baskervilles-sherlock-holmes-and-conan-doyles-finest-hour

The invaluable **Ken Ross** has uploaded his complete video record of the Society's Golden Jubilee Cruise around the Baltic Sea. It's in several separate parts, from the start in London to the coach leaving Harwich at the end. You'll find the recordings, and Ken's numerous others, at www.youtube.com/results?search_query=sherlock+holmes+society+of+london.

On the Society's website at www.sherlock-holmes.org.uk, clicking on 'Gallery' will take you straight to our Flickr photo albums, the latest being from last month's 'Capital Return' weekend. The photos go back to the Society's foundation in 1951, but there are notable gaps. We've few pictures of Annual Dinners before 2005, and none of the Twentieth Anniversary meeting at the Victoria & Albert Museum on 24 May 1971, or the Ballad Evening at the Queen's Hotel, Crystal Palace on 15 June 1974. Then there are the outings in: 1969 to Eastbourne, 1971 down the Thames, 1972 to Bath, 1973 to Cambridge, 1975 to Dartmoor, 1977 to Groombridge, Forest Row & Crowborough, 1979 to Dartmoor, 1980 down the Thames, 1982 to Southsea & Minstead, 1983 to Herefordshire, 1987 down the Thames, 1991 to Winchester, 1993 to France, 1993 to Sussex – and no doubt others. If you can help fill a gap, please let me know, as I'm now looking after the digital photo archive.

From 26 to 28 September you can join **The Reichenbach Irregulars** at the Schatzalp Mountain Resort in Davos for 'Alpine Adventures': *Arthur Conan Doyle & Switzerland*. Speakers will be Peter Blau, Vincent Delay, Jon Lellenberg, Julie McKuras, Michael Ross, and the organisers, Marcus Geisser and Michael Meer. For full details, contact Marcus at marcus_geisser@hotmail.com or Michael at meer@221b.ch.

Steve Moore, who died on 16 March aged sixty-four, was a founder of *The Fortean Times* and a respected writer of comic strips and graphic novels. He's credited with the 1979 *Sherlock Holmes & Dr Watson Annual*, a spin-off from a TV series that was never shown in the UK.

The composer, conductor and broadcaster **Antony Hopkins** was an amiable and witty guest of honour at our Annual Dinner in 1990. He died on 21 March at the age of ninety-three.

Francis Matthews will long be remembered as the voice of Captain Scarlet in Gerry Anderson's animated TV series *Captain Scarlet and the Mysterons* and as the suave detective Paul Temple in a BBC TV series. His many other rôles included a more than acceptable Sherlock Holmes in the original production of Brian Clemens' play *Holmes and the Ripper* in 1988. He died on 14 June, aged eighty-six.

Periodicals received. *Arthur Conan Doyle Newsletter and Birthday File*, 22 May 2014 (**Conan Doyle [Crowborough] Establishment**, Brian Pugh, www.the-conan-doyle-crowborough-establishment.com). *The Bilge Pump*, June 2014 (**The Crew of the Barque Lone Star**, Steve Mason, <http://barquelonestar.com>). *Bootmakers Summer Newsletter* and *Canadian Holmes*, Summer 2014 (**The Bootmakers of Toronto**, Mark & JoAnn Alberstat, <http://www.torontobootmakers.com>). *The Camden House Journal*, January, February, March, April, May & June 2014 (**The Occupants of the Empty House**, Debbie Tinsley, PO Box 21, Zeigler, IL 62999, USA). *Cri Bar Crier*, April 2014 (**The Criterion Bar Association**, Susan Z Diamond, 16W603 3rd Ave, Bensenville, IL 60106-2327, USA). *For the Sake of the Trust*, Spring 2014 (**BSI Trust**, Marshall S Berdan BSI, editor@bsitrust.org). *Ineffable Twaddle*, June 2014 (**The Sound of the Baskervilles**, Terri Haugen, www.soundofthebaskervilles.com). *The Petrel Flyer*, June 2014 (**The Stormy Petrels of British Columbia**, Len Haffenden, <http://thestormypetrels.com>) [**Len's last issue, after twenty-two years at the helm. Thank you for steering a straight course!**]. *Proceedings of the Pondicherry Lodge*, June 2014 (**The Sherlock Holmes Society of India**, Jayantika Ganguly, shseditors@yahoo.in). *Proceedings of the Sherlock Holmes Society of The Hague*, May 2014 (The Society, Jacques Zonneveld, Vlierboomstraat 464, 2564 JL Den Haag, Holland). *Report from the Unscrupulous Rascals*, May 2014 (**The Sherlock Holmes Society of South Australia**, Mark Chellew, 50 Richmond Ave, Colonel Light Gardens, SA 5041, Australia). *The Scion*, Summer 2014 [**sadly, the real final issue**] (**The Musgraves**, Anne Jordan, Hallas Lodge, Greenside Lane, Cullingworth, Bradford BD13 5AP). *The Serpentine Muse*, Summer 2014 (**The Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes**, Evelyn Herzog, www.ash-nyc.com). *The Watsonian*, Spring 2014 (**the John H Watson Society**, Joanne Yates, publisher@johnhwatsonociety.com).

And *Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press*, May 2014 (Peter E Blau, 7103 Endicott Court, Bethesda, MD 20817-4401, USA; blau7103@comcast.net).

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